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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000276

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: PAS KINSHASA REQUEST FOR FY 2010 SPEAKERS ON DRC SPECIFIC ISSUES

11. This is an action request for IIP. Please see the speaker request below.

12. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: Post requests speakers to address three issues critical to the DRC and Embassy Kinshasa's MSP priorities to advance USG policy in the DRC (1) women's empowerment issues, (2) effective food security strategies and (3) the development of democratic institutions and civil society. Regional posts that have also expressed interest in participating in a Strategic Speakers Initiative (SSI) include Kigali, Bujumbura, Libreville, Bangui, and Brazzaville.

13. TIME FRAME: Post would like the programs to take place late March and April 2010.

14. PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM: The DRC faces numerous development challenges to develop a sustainable democratic and prosperous society. Secretary Clinton's August 2009 trip to the DRC highlighted the plight faced by women who are victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). During her trip, she and President Kabila highlighted key priority areas, which the Embassy has followed-up on by working with inter-agency assessment teams to examine these issues and propose recommendation for coordination with the GDRC and donor community to address these critical issues. PAS Kinshasa would like to use the SSI to address two of these priority areas: women's empowerment (with a focus on SGBV), and food security (which also must be addressed for the DRC to improve social conditions for its population). In addition, as the DRC is planning to hold local and national elections in 2011, the country must address the country's political environment and develop key institutions, such as civil society.

15. AUDIENCE: Audiences will include members of civil society groups, local NGO and advocacy groups, government officials, and other relevant contacts engaged on these issues.

16. PROPOSED TOPICS/NATURE OF EVENTS: Proposed possible topics would include 1) tools used by various societies to combat sexual violence 2) ways and techniques to enhance food security 3) the evolution of strong civil society groups in sub-Saharan Africa, and roles played by civil society in electoral activities. Events would involve formal presentations followed by discussion groups among audience members. Speakers could also be utilized for media engagements, and work directly with key contacts on specific issues.

¶7. TYPE OF SPECIALIST REQUIRED: Post requests speakers who are knowledgeable on sexual violence and gender rights, food security issues, and NGO/civil society development. Practitioners in each of these fields would be preferable.

¶8. JUSTIFICATION: This program supports Mission Strategic Plan goals of combating SGBV and promoting gender rights, improving livelihoods, and developing democratic institutions. This program fits with Embassy priorities established during the Secretary's trip.

¶9. LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS: French is highly desirable.

¶10. REQUEST FOR SUPPORTING BIBLIOGRAPHIC MATERIALS: Appropriate background material is requested.

¶11. POST CONTACT INFORMATION: Assistant Public Affairs Officer
Jitu Sardar

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¶12. FUNDING: Post requests SSI resources to fund these speaker programs.

¶13. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Given the growing profile of the DRC in an international context, visitors are frequent. As a result, any speaker programs may need to be re-scheduled if the volume of visitors restricts hotel rooms, usage of Embassy services, etc.
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